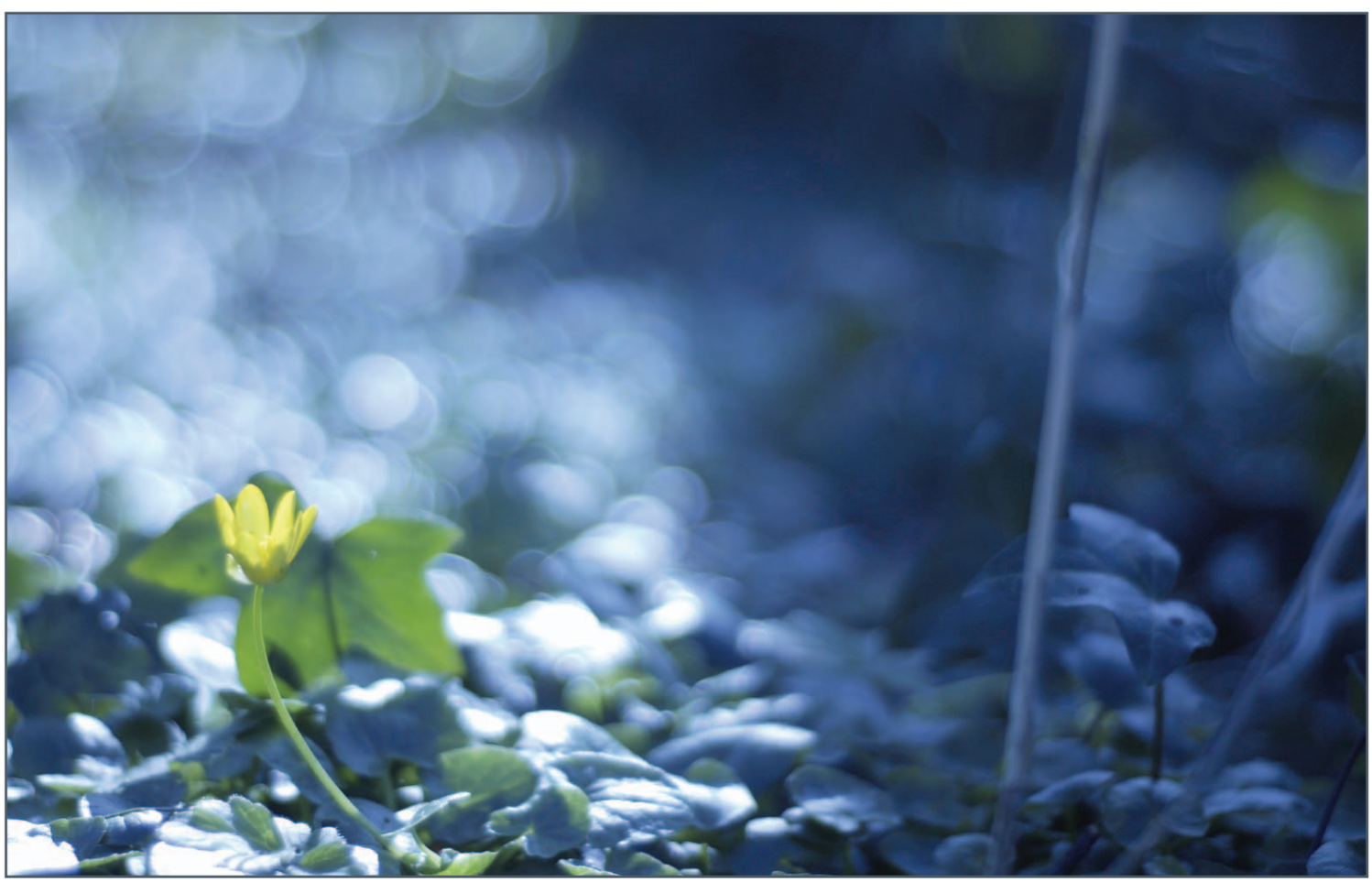
NAXOS

Sir Charles Villiers STANFORD

Clarinet Sonata

Piano Trio No. 3

Robert Plane, Clarinet • Gould Piano Trio
Mia Cooper, Violin • David Adams, Viola



Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924): Music for Clarinet • Piano Trio No. 3

Born in Dublin in 1852 into an Irish Protestant family, Charles Villiers Stanford was the son of a distinguished lawyer. Brought up in a cultured home background, he showed early exceptional musical ability, and was allowed by his father, who had intended his son for the law, to contemplate a musical career, supported by earlier more conventional studies. In 1870 Stanford went to Cambridge, with a classical scholarship to Queens' College, where he was also awarded an organ scholarship. While his performance as a classical scholar may have lacked distinction, he won a considerable reputation for himself as a musician, becoming organist at Trinity College in 1873 and serving as a choral conductor. After his graduation in 1874, Stanford, as planned, left for Germany, while retaining his position as organist in Cambridge through the help of deputies. His choice, on the advice of Sterndale Bennett, was to study music in Leipzig, where he spent two years as a pupil of Reinecke, before, now on the advice of Joachim, moving to Berlin, where, to greater profit, he was a pupil of Friedrich Kiel. Stanford's period of study in Germany was to be followed by a career in which German influences remained important, as a composer with the example of Brahms, while Joseph Joachim remained an important friend for many years. It was often in Germany that Stanford sought to have his works performed, particularly his operas, which had a better chance of staging there than in England.

In Cambridge Stanford had secured his reputation as an organist from the start of his career there. His position as conductor of the Cambridge University Music Society, to which he had been elected in 1873, provided an opportunity for the performance of his own compositions and for the encouragement of others. Eventually, in 1887, he was to be appointed Professor of Music at Cambridge, a position he held with that of Professor of Composition at the newly established Royal College of Music in London, the latter employment held jointly with Hubert Parry. His responsibilities at the Royal College included shared conductorship of the orchestra. Stanford, with his bases in Cambridge and London, and his involvement with major musical activities in England, held a leading position in the life of the country. His influence as a teacher was incalculable. The list of his pupils contains the names of many of the principal British composers of the twentieth century, from Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst to Frank Bridge and Arthur Bliss. Abroad he won a reputation, notably in Germany through the connections he had made there over the years, with first performances that included the première in Hanover in 1881 of his opera *The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan*, and of *Savonarola*, denied a proper performance in London through litigation over the use of an English libretto, in Hamburg in 1884. In opera, indeed, he did much to further his ambitions for viable opera in London, helped through his innovations in this field at the Royal College of Music.

Stanford enjoyed the height of his fame as a composer in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth. Knighted in 1902, by 1914 his reputation had started to fade, and his music began to seem old-fashioned. He had made significant and lasting additions and reforms to the repertoire of Anglican church music, with anthems and service settings, but in his orchestral music the example of Schumann and Brahms had always remained of importance. There was also, however, a strong Irish element that found overt expression in six *Irish Rhapsodies*, an *Irish Concertino*, in his *'Irish' Symphony* of 1887, the third of his seven symphonies, and in many of his vocal works. His Irish loyalties, however, did not extend to any sympathy with Republicans, and he was deeply opposed to Irish home rule, let alone any ideas of further independence.

The earliest of the works recorded here, the *Three Intermezzi for clarinet and piano, Op. 13*, were written towards the end of 1879 and first performed at a Cambridge University Musical Society concert in February 1880 by Stanford with Francis Galpin, then an undergraduate at Trinity, librarian of the Musical Society and organ pupil of Sterndale Bennett. Galpin was ordained in the Church of England in 1883 and

went on to combine his ecclesiastical duties with a study of musical instruments. His distinctive and wide-ranging contribution to organology was recognised after his death in 1945 by the creation of the Galpin Society, which continues his work. The publisher of the *Intermezzi* offered the three pieces as for violin (or clarinet) and piano, but Stanford was quite clear about his own intentions in his idiomatic writing for the clarinet in works that anticipate Brahms's clarinet works by over ten years. The first *Intermezzo*, in B flat major, has a livelier contrasting middle section. The second, in D minor, has a middle section marked *Tranquillo* and in B flat major, finding occasional use for Brahmsian cross-rhythms, and the third, in C minor, makes characteristic use of clarinet arpeggios in the C major middle section, with its arpeggiated piano chords.

The other works date from relatively late in Stanford's career. His *Clarinet Sonata, Op. 129*, was completed in 1911 and dedicated to the clarinettists Oscar Street, a pupil of George Clinton, and Charles Draper, who had been a pupil of Henry Lazarus. Street combined his work as a solicitor with orchestral-playing, while Draper had been the soloist in Stanford's *Clarinet Concerto* in 1903 and gave the first performance of the sonata in 1916 with Stanford's former pupil Thomas Dunhill, as part of a chamber music series arranged by the latter. The sonata, with distinct echoes of Brahms, starts with a sonata-form movement, with a third theme in A flat major that is alluded to once more in the final section. The slow movement, with the title *Caoiṅe* (Keen), an Irish lament, marked *Adagio (quasi Fantasia*), allows the clarinet to explore its possibilities in runs and arpeggios, while the piano from time to time echos the Irish harp in its arpeggiated chords. Brahms returns in the final *Allegretto grazioso* in which the opening rhythmic motif assumes some importance, and a secondary theme makes use of the lower register of the clarinet. The movement ends in hushed tranquillity.

By 1918, the date of his *Piano Trio No. 3, Op. 158, 'Per aspera ad astra'*, musical fashions had changed and Stanford was finding that there was no longer a market, at least for his more ambitious compositions. Financial needs necessitated further work, and he seems to have felt rightly embittered at the poor material reward for his manifold services to British music. At the same time he made no attempt to hide his views on contemporary musical trends. The score of the *Piano Trio*, completed in April 1918, eventually contained the initials of two of the sons of Alan Gray, his successor as organist at Trinity and as conductor of the Cambridge University Musical Society, both of whom had been killed during the last months of the war. Tightly constructed, the Trio opens with a movement marked *Allegro moderato ma con fuoco*, its dramatic opening leading to the first of two themes that dominate the movement. The F major *Adagio*, with its contrasting middle section, is followed by a final A major *Allegro maestoso e moderato* in which counterpoint has its part, notably in a 6/4 quasi-fugal section before the final coda.

The two *Fantasies*, for clarinet and string quartet, were written in October 1921 and January 1922 respectively, it has been suggested for student performance at the Royal College (qv. Jeremy Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician*, Oxford 2002). They were published in 1996. The *Fantasies* are both in three movements, perhaps to be played without a break. The first starts with a G minor march, to which the clarinet enters in syncopation. The E flat major *Andante* is followed by a lively final movement that eventually makes its way to the key of G major. The second of the two links the movements with thematic material from the first movement, which returns after the quasi-scherzo of the third movement, with its contrasting Trio section. Both works are evidence of Stanford's continued interest in the clarinet, to the repertoire of which he had made such significant contributions.

Keith Anderson

Robert Plane

Since winning the Royal Overseas League Music Competition in London in 1992, clarinettist Robert Plane has enjoyed a successful and varied career as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral principal. He has become particularly well known for his best-selling Naxos recording of Finzi's *Clarinet Concerto* (Naxos 8.553566), which is frequently broadcast and won 'Best Concerto Recording' in the Classic CD Awards in 2000 as well as an Editor's Choice recommendation in *The Gramophone*. He made his Swiss début in 2004, performing Finzi's *Clarinet Concerto* with the Zurich Chamber Orchestra in the prestigious Tonhalle. He has performed Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto* with the City of London Sinfonia on tour in Spain and in Great Britain has appeared with the Ulster Orchestra, Bournemouth Sinfonietta and Scottish Ensemble. Robert Plane made his London recital début with pianist Sophia Rahman in 1993 in the Park Lane Group's 'New Year Series' at the Purcell Room. Together with viola-player Philip Dukes they formed the Plane Dukes Rahman Trio in 1992. As a chamber musician he has played at many of the major British halls including the Wigmore, Bridgewater, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Queen's Hall, Edinburgh, and St George's, Bristol. Overseas chamber tours have taken him to North and South America, South Korea and Taiwan and much of Europe, including Germany, France, the Republic of Ireland, Malta, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, performing at festivals from Cheltenham, Spitalfields and Belfast to Hambachermusikfest and Tanglewood. He is clarinettist of the septet mobius with whom he has recorded Weber's *Clarinet Quintet* and Françaix's *Clarinet Quintet*. His large discography also includes James MacMillan's clarinet quintet, *'Tuireadh'* for BIS and the complete clarinet works of Herbert Howells (Naxos 8.557188) and Sir Arnold Bax, the latter including world première recordings of his early *Clarinet Sonata in E* and the *Trio in One Movement* for clarinet, violin and piano (Naxos 8.557968), shortlisted for a Chamber Music Gramophone Award in 2006. Recordings of Nielsen and Copland Concertos and Debussy's *Première Rapsodie* have featured on the cover disc of *BBC Music Magazine*. He has collaborated with many other ensembles, including the Vellinger, Emperor, Mandelring and Auer Quartets, the Leopold String Trio and the chamber ensemble of the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields. He particularly enjoys performing with the Gould Piano Trio and together they established their own annual chamber music festival in the picturesque country town of Corbridge in Northumberland in 1999. Before joining the BBC National Orchestra of Wales as principal clarinet in 1999, Robert Plane was principal clarinet with Northern Sinfonia. He teaches clarinet at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and the Plane Dukes Rahman Trio are Artists-in-Residence at Queen's University, Belfast.

Gould Piano Trio

Lucy Gould, Violin • Alice Neary, Cello • Benjamin Frith, Piano

The Gould Piano Trio has established a reputation as one of the most stylish and versatile ensembles performing today. Highly regarded in the field of chamber music, the Trio enjoys a career that takes them to major venues in Britain and overseas. Chosen as British Rising Stars for the 1998-9 season, the Trio has performed in such prestigious venues as New York's Carnegie Hall, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Brussels Palais des Beaux-Arts, Birmingham Symphony Hall and major halls in Paris, Cologne, Athens and Vienna. Festival appearances have included Edinburgh, Cheltenham, Bath, Spoleto and the BBC Proms, whilst overseas travels have taken them to New Zealand, South Korea and Taiwan, South America and most European countries. They regularly tour to the United States, performing in the Lincoln Center, Weil Hall and at the Frick Collection. In Britain they appear at the Wigmore Hall, Bridgewater Hall, Purcell Room, LSO St. Luke's, Queen's Hall Edinburgh, and they gave one of the first chamber concerts at The Sage, Gateshead as part of an Arts Council-sponsored "Around the Country" national tour. Frequent broadcasts from these venues have made the Goulds a familiar ensemble to listeners of BBC Radio 3. Both the BBC Symphony Orchestra and BBC Philharmonic invited the Trio to perform James MacMillan's chamber works at their festivals. They have recorded trios by Mendelssohn and Bax for Naxos as well as Robert Fuchs (world première recordings), Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov and a cycle of Brahms *Trios* for Quartz. In 1999 the Trio started their own annual chamber music festival in Corbridge, Northumberland. The Gould Piano Trio have been the recipients of many national and international awards; First Prize at the Charles Hennen Competition in Holland was followed by joint First Prize in the inaugural Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition in Australia. At the 1993 Premio Vittorio Gui Competition in Florence they were awarded the audience prize in addition to the overall First Prize. In Britain the Trio has won awards from the Tillett and John Tunnell Trusts. Since 1995 the Trio has been ensemble-in-residence at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, giving concerts, master-classes and chamber music coaching.

Mia Cooper

Mia Cooper studied at the Royal Northern College of Music with Yossi Zivoni and has been involved in a wide variety of music making in the ten years since. She was principal first violin of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra for five years, and also regularly plays and records with London's chamber orchestras and ensembles, including the Fibonacci Sequence, Barbican Trio, Brodsky Quartet, Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields. Mia has been a guest leader of the CBSO, and BBC National Orchestra of Wales and before moving to Dublin, spent three summers leading the St Endellion Orchestra. Mia participates in chamber music festivals across Europe, and also in Mumbai, and last summer performed in Lithuania a music project of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where both rôles and music were performed by seven musicians (in Lithuanian). As a soloist Mia has performed much of the Baroque solo violin repertoire with the New London Soloist's Orchestra, and also plays as a soloist with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra. She has recorded a wide variety of chamber music, including works by Nicola Lefanu (Goldberg Ensemble, Naxos 8.557389), Bartók (Duos, with Yossi Zivoni) and Stanford (clarinet quintets with Rob Plane and the Gould Piano Trio). Mia teaches violin at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. She was appointed leader of the RTÉ Concert Orchestra in 2006.

David Adams

David Adams is Leader of the Ulster Orchestra and Co-Artistic Director of the Goldberg Ensemble. As an orchestral leader David has appeared with many of the UK's symphony and chamber orchestras including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, City of London Sinfonia, English Chamber Orchestra, and Orchestra of St. Johns. Equally at home on violin and viola he has made numerous guest appearances with the Nash Ensemble, the Lindsays, Endellion Quartet, Leopold String Trio, Hebrides Ensemble, Gould Piano Trio, Sorrel and Danel String Quartets. His other musical collaborations include concerts and broadcasts with Steven Isserlis, Alexander Janizcek and James Clark. David began his studies at the age of 5 with his father, principal viola in the Hallé Orchestra. He continued his training with Malcolm Layfield at Chetham's School of Music and the RNCM and then in the USA with Zvi Zeitlin and Daniel Phillips. He has recently acquired a beautiful Johannes Gagliano violin from 1800 and plays a Betts viola c.1840 previously played by his father.

NAXOS

STANFORD: Clarinet Sonata • Piano Trio No. 3

8.570416

At the height of his career Sir Charles Stanford held a leading position in British music, not only as a teacher of many of the most important composers of the new generation, but as one of the most significant British composers – the other was Sir Hubert Parry – to have emerged immediately before Elgar. Chiefly remembered today for his *Irish Rhapsodies*, *Seven Symphonies* and *Clarinet Concerto*, Stanford composed many chamber works, including several for clarinet written in what might be described as a 'Brahmsian' idiom. The *Piano Trio No. 3*, the last of three which span Stanford's mature career, was written as a tribute to friends lost in the First World War.

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

Sir Charles Villiers STANFORD
(1852-1924)

	Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 129	**18:44**
1	Allegro moderato	7:33
2	Caoine: Adagio (quasi fantasia)	5:40
3	Allegretto grazioso	5:31
	Fantasy No. 1 for Clarinet and String Quartet * †	**11:39**
4	Allegro moderato alla marcia	1:53
5	Andante	5:45
6	Allegro	4:01
	Fantasy No. 2 for Clarinet and String Quartet * †	**14:37**
7	Allegretto piacevole	2:57
8	Adagio	4:56
9	Quasi presto	6:43
	Three Intermezzi for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 13	**8:06**
10	No. 1 Andante espressivo	3:19
11	No. 2 Allegro agitato	2:16
12	No. 3 Allegretto scherzando	2:31
	Piano Trio No. 3, Op. 158	
	Per aspera ad astra **	**20:59**
13	Allegro moderato ma con fuoco	6:48
14	Adagio	7:01
15	Allegro maestoso e moderato	7:11

** World Première Recording

Robert Plane, Clarinet • Gould Piano Trio
(Lucy Gould, Violin • Alice Neary, Cello • Benjamin Frith, Piano)
Mia Cooper, Violin II* • David Adams, Viola†

Recorded in Potton Hall, Westleton, Suffolk, 17-19 December, 2006
Producer and Engineer: Michael Ponder • Booklet Notes: Keith Anderson
Publishers: Stainer & Bell Ltd. (tracks 1-3) • S J Music (tracks 4-9) • Chester Music Ltd. (tracks 10-12)
Augener Ltd. (track 13-15) • Booklet Notes: Keith Anderson • Cover Photo: *Buttercup* (iStockphoto.com)

Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama
Coleg Brenhinol Cerdd a Drama Cymru *This recording is supported by a Research Award from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama*

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Playing Time
74:05

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